



**TESTIMONY OF
CONNECTICUT HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Wednesday, March 14, 2007**

**SB 1342, An Act Concerning Linguistic Access In Hospitals
And Continuing Education In Cultural And Linguistic Competence**

The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 1342, An Act Concerning Linguistic Access In Hospitals And Continuing Education In Cultural And Linguistic Competence**.

SB 1342 would increase state oversight on hospitals for an existing set of requirements for the provision of interpreter services to non-English-speaking patients. CHA supports the goal of providing interpreter services to, and improving linguistic access for, non-English-speaking patients. Unfortunately, SB 1342 does not improve the current system. More oversight would add an unnecessary, administrative layer that would result in expenditure of costly resources without improving the situation. The state could improve services for non-English speaking patients by directing more resources in developing a program to increase the number of qualified medical interpreters.

Hospitals already provide interpreter services for their many non-English-speaking patients. However, as the demand for interpreters rises, it is increasingly becoming more difficult to find a sufficient number of qualified medical interpreters who can provide these services. CHA urges the state to take the lead and create a program to encourage and develop medical interpreters and contract for language interpretation services for all non-English-speaking patients. Optimally, the state could administer a statewide program through which Connecticut hospitals and other healthcare providers could access medical interpreters for their patients. Developing a sufficient number of medical interpreters in the state will enable hospitals to focus on taking care of patients, and gain access to more efficient and consistent interpreter services for their patients.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

For additional information, contact CHA Government Relations at (203) 294-7310.